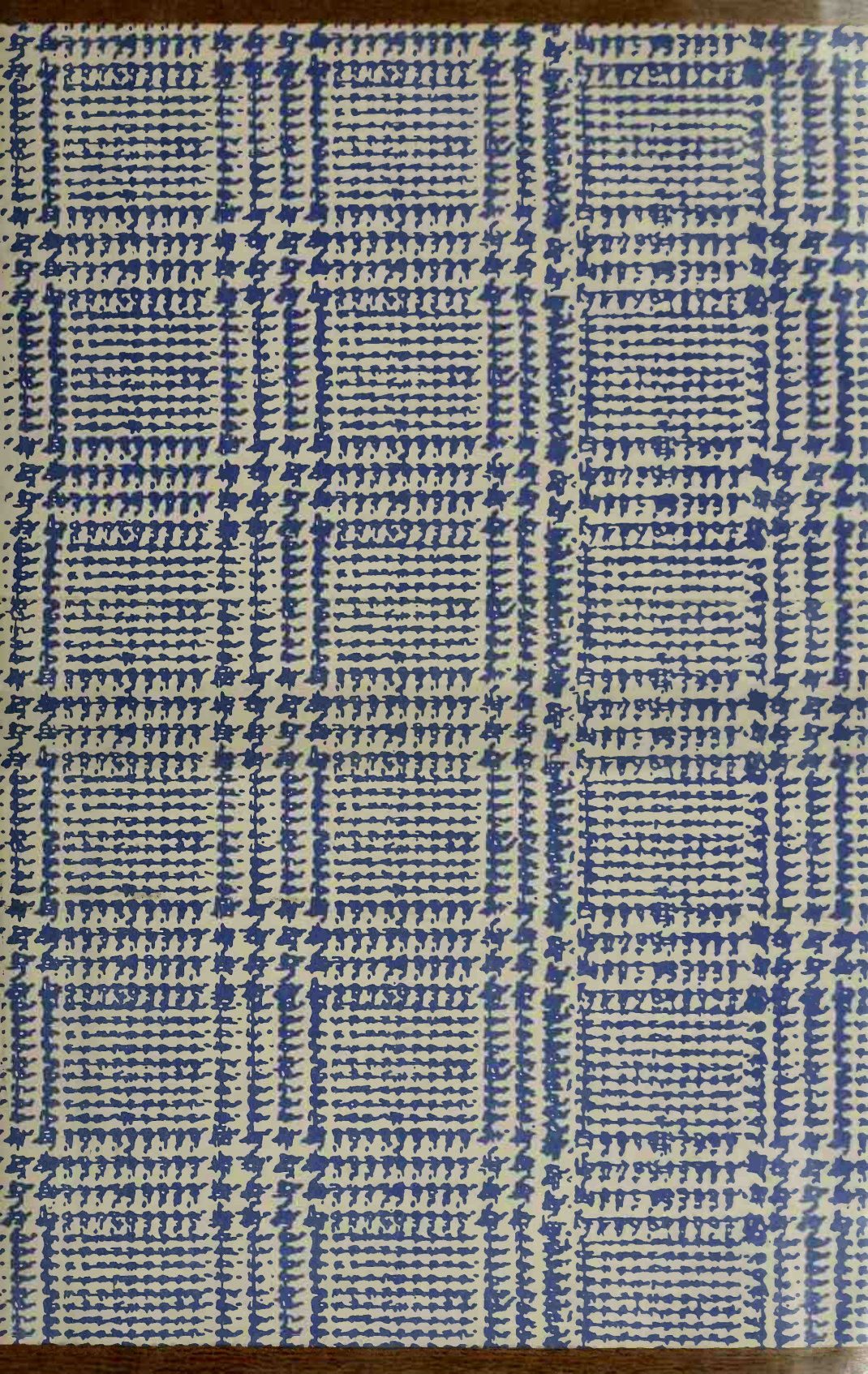

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THE NEWS LETTER

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The year 1923 completed the decade since the establishment of the first sight conservation class in America. In 1909 Mr. Edward E. Allen, Director of Perkins Institute for the Blind, returned from a visit to England where he had carefully studied the classes for myopes established in London by Dr. N. Bishop Harmon. In his own school Mr. Allen had tried to cope with the problem of educating children with seriously defective vision. They could not see well enough to use the equipment of the regular schools, yet had too much sight to be candidates for schools for the blind. To prevent such children from being left without educational advantages schools for the blind reluctantly admitted them.

Having sight, these children would naturally use their eyes instead of their fingers in attempting to read Braille, thus jeopardizing the little sight they possessed. They made their companions among the blind instead of among the sighted. They were made eyes for the blind, which not only put an added strain upon their weakened sight but gave them an exaggerated idea of their own powers.

Classes similar to those established by Dr. Harmon, but with a wider viewpoint, including all kinds of defective vision, seemed to Mr. Allen a solution of the problem. For years he urged their establishment in public school systems, but it was not until April, 1913, that owing chiefly to the generosity of Perkins Institution the first sight conservation class was established in Roxbury, Massachusetts. In September of the same year a class was started in Cleveland by Mr. Robert B. Irwin.

The National Committee early recognized that these classes would prove most beneficial in saving sight, and has worked indefatigably for their establishment in public schools. During the decade the growth has been slow but sure. At the close of 1923 the two classes of 1913 had increased to 180.

The first object of such classes is to save sight, the second to make possible an education. To attain these ends the most careful supervision is given to eye conditions. Every child is under the care of an eye specialist who regulates the amount of close eye work to be done. Special equipment is provided—hygienic seats, desks that adjust to a correct angle, large type books, maps with no confusing details, large heavy pencils and extra size paper, and material for hand work. Special attention is given to lighting conditions and to the avoidance of glare, to the color of walls and ceilings, to the finish of tables and chairs, so that there will be no light reflected from polished surfaces.

Children are not segregated in these classes, but are members of the regular grade and do their oral work with normally sighted children. They go into the special class room for all close eye work, under the supervision of a specially trained teacher. When these classes were in the experimental stage, teachers were obliged to "blaze their own trail"; now that they have become accepted parts of the most advanced school systems, specially trained teachers are required and courses are now being given in preparation for this work. The Secretary of the National Committee will conduct one of these courses at the Peabody College summer session, 1924.

The problem of finding occupational opportunities for the graduates of these classes is one that requires the most serious consideration, since the painstaking work of the teacher during the school period may be undone in a few months where an occupation is undertaken in which there is eyestrain. The National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, in co-operation with the supervisors and teachers of these classes, is listing occupations advisable and available.

To stop the drinking of wood alcohol in England, the government will adulterate all methylated spirit sold after May first with a new substance designed to make it undrinkable.

NEWS OF THE JUNIOR COMMITTEE

The Junior League of Kingston, New York, made arrangements in April for Miss Eleanor P. Brown, Secretary of the Junior Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, to spend two days in Kingston speaking before assemblies at the eight elementary schools of

the city. The Committee received hearty co-operation from the Kingston Department of Education and the school principals, and approximately 3,000 children were reached by these talks on eye care.

The illustrated book-plate carrying suggestions for correct use of the eyes has been enlarged and produced in poster form. The posters sell for ten cents each, postpaid, twelve for one dollar and seventy-five for five dollars.

KANSAS

The Kansas State Association for the Blind, of which Rev. I. A. Wilson of Topeka is president, had its annual meeting in Kansas City on May 29th and 30th. The Kansas Association is active in the prevention of blindness, and it is largely due to its activities that the Kansas Legislature passed an act in 1923 creating a State Commission for the Blind charged with special duties and powers in the field of prevention. Upon the request of the Kansas Association the Managing Director was present during the Convention and took an active part in helping to formulate future policies.

KENTUCKY

The Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of County Health Work of Kentucky gives some very encouraging accomplishments.

MAINE

At the request of the Maine Public Health Association and the State Board of Education, the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness is again arranging a course for teachers at the summer session of Castine Normal School. This will consist of five illustrated lectures on the Teacher's Responsibility for Caring for the Sight of Her Pupils.

MISSOURI

The Missouri Commission and the Missouri Association for the Blind are engaged in making a census of blind persons in the state. This census shows that of 200 blind pensioners in Buchanan County, trachoma and cataract account for 37.

At the request of these two organizations, Mr. Lewis H. Carris, Managing Director of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, went to Kansas City to assist in the campaign for establishing sight conservation classes.

While in Kansas City he addressed a meeting of ophthalmologists and also the Chamber of Commerce. The Jackson County Medical Society passed resolutions endorsing conservation of vision classes and it is hoped that the Kansas City Board of Education will put in operation one or more such classes in the fall.

NEW JERSEY

Dr. David B. Corson, City Superintendent of Schools, Newark, recommends the organization of two sight-saving classes. He had a preparatory survey made and found forty-two pupils requiring the advantages of specialized education provided by such classes.

NEW YORK

The New York State Commission for the Blind has completed its census of blind persons. Every name has been checked up. There are now on the list 8,001 people. Of these, 3,728 are residents of New York City. This number does not, of course, include a very much larger number suffering from seriously defective vision.

Binghamton is endeavoring to make it possible for each child of school age in the city to be given the opportunity of an education. Excellent school buildings have been erected and splendid programs are being carried out in the elementary, junior high and high schools.

In these programs due emphasis has been placed upon the importance of health. The Department of Physical Education has inaugurated a very efficient system whereby each child is put into the best physical condition possible; his record is followed up to see that this status is maintained. The same opportunity is afforded the teaching staff.

Special classes for handicapped children are being organized as rapidly as circumstances permit. The group now under consideration includes children suffering from such seriously defective vision that they cannot take work satisfactorily in the regular grades.

At the request of Dr. D. J. Kelly, Superintendent of Schools, and Miss Effie F. Knowlton, Director of Physical Education, the New York State Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, looking toward the organization of a conservation of vision class, undertook some demonstration work in the schools. Conferences were held with the departmental heads and with the school nurses and lectures were given illustrated by motion pictures and slides.

While New York State now has the largest number of conserva-

tion of vision classes in the country, many cities that should be maintaining these classes have as yet failed to establish them. In arranging their programs for the next school year, it is sincerely hoped that serious consideration will be given to the organization of sight-saving classes for children handicapped by defective vision.

PENNSYLVANIA

The Fourteenth Annual Report of the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind includes the following from Dr. W. W. Blair, Chairman of the Committee on Prevention of Blindness:

"Of all the work undertaken by the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, none is more important than that of preventing blindness. In one sense this work is more important than any other performed by the Association, for in proportion as blindness is prevented, all our other work is rendered wholly unnecessary. Few people, however, fully realize the measure of relief which this department, inadequate as it is to the field to be covered, brings to poor suffering humanity.

"Upwards of 200 new cases of eye trouble have been reported to us during the year, of which 194, together with 25 cases previously reported, have, through the good offices of our nurse in charge, received prompt treatment from competent oculists, either in their offices or in leading Pittsburgh dispensaries. Sixty of the persons thus treated required eyeglasses. It is no easy matter to induce people with incipient or even with advanced eye trouble to have their eyes treated, and yet such has been the persistency of our nurse that only twelve cases of the two hundred and six reported last year have failed utterly to appear for treatment, the majority of these living in sections remote from dispensaries. To accomplish the results mentioned, two hundred and sixty-one visits have been made to the homes of these patients and four hundred and forty-six visits to offices of oculists, hospitals, dispensaries and opticians.

"Thanks to the hard work on the part of the members of the Pocahontas Women's Club of Pittsburgh, of which Mrs. J. G. Lewis, member of our Board of Directors, is President, we are to have from this club a donation of $1,000 to devote to the prevention of blindness. This will undoubtedly save the sight of many persons who would otherwise go blind during the coming year and will accordingly prevent much unnecessary suffering, at the same time that it will save the State and community many thousands of dollars in the form of economic efficiency.

"Our President, in his annual message, referred to the campaign conducted by the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness in connection with Pittsburgh's First Week for the Blind, and we sincerely trust that a similar campaign will be waged every year, and that 1924 will witness much greater activity in the prevention of blindness than has taken place during the twelve months just past."

NEWS OF ARTICLES OF INTEREST

SILVER NITRATE SOLUTION DISTRIBUTED TO MIDWIVES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, *Weekly Bulletin* of the Department of Health, City of New York, May 24, 1924. "For a number of years the Department of Health has been supplying midwives with silver nitrate solution to be used in the prevention of ophthalmia neonatorum. The solution has been put up in wax capsules, two in each container. That the provision of the Sanitary Code requiring this work on the part of midwives is efficient is proved by the fact that during the past few years very few cases of this dread disease have been reported in the practice of midwives, there having been only 6 in the year 1922, and 2 in 1923.

"Recently, an improvement has been made in both the wax capsule holding the silver nitrate solution and in the container itself. The capsule, as now made, is lined with paraffin so as to prevent any precipitation of the silver salt. The box container has been changed from a round wooden one to a flat tin package. In each such box, as distributed to the midwives, are two wax capsules containing about ten minims of a one per cent solution of silver nitrate, a needle with which to puncture the capsule, and simple directions."

THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES AND MAN BUT TWO. Woods Hutchinson, A.M., M.D. This has been reprinted, by permission, from the *Saturday Evening Post*. Copies may be obtained from the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness.

MEDICAL RESEARCH IN CONNECTION WITH OPHTHALMOLOGIC HOSPITALS AND CLINICS. Conrad Berens, Jr., M.D. A special report reprinted from the *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, January, 1924.

This paper gives a brief account of the founding of the section of Ophthalmology of the Associated Out-Patient Clinics of New York to consider ways and means of promoting higher standards of service. It states that one of the most unsatisfactory conditions found was the almost entire lack of organization or facilities for research in the large ophthalmologic institutions of New York. No real organization for research was found in any

institution. It sets forth the difficulty of the research worker and suggests a plan by which preventive ophthalmology, and particularly that part relating to the prevention of blindness, may be placed on a solid foundation through scientific investigation; so that any person qualified to do research in ophthalmology should be encouraged to present a problem and, if it seem practical, should be given every assistance in completing his work.

"Everyone knows how ignorant we are of the causes of some of the most common ocular diseases which should be, and we all hope some day will be preventable; for example sympathetic ophthalmia, phlyctenular keratitis, glaucoma and some forms of cataract. With definite knowledge of the causes of these ocular affections, our preventive measures might be made more specific, which would mean a great step forward in the problem of prevention of blindness."

The plan outlined would use the resources of a general hospital, adding very little to the expense. Such plan would function for all departments, thus decreasing the overhead chargeable to any special service.

How Goggles Should be Worn. Dr. Frederick Willson, *National Safety News*, May, 1924. Sums up several reasons why goggles are not worn and suggests remedies. The first complaint considered is discomfort; the remedies suggested are that the goggle must fit the face, be properly adjusted at the nose and head band and place no reasonable obstacle in the way of clear forward vision.

The complaint that the goggles "draw the eyes" should be considered from the standpoint of possible defective vision; the remedy suggested is to give the benefit of correction as well as of eye protection.

The third complaint that the goggles "steam or become clouded by perspiration" may be met by goggles sufficiently ventilated to prevent this or by the use of a sweat band.

"The plant employing a large number of men wearing goggles should set aside a portion of a day once a month or more often if desired for inspection and goggle drill, every man receiving a rating in the safety department according to the condition of his goggles, how he wore them, how they were adapted, etc. . . . the understanding of these points would finally eliminate the natural antipathy to goggles which is still rather common among workmen."

Solving the Lighting Problems of Mercantile Establishments. *The Industrial Bulletin*, issued by the Industrial Commission of New York State, Albany, New York, April, 1924. There is a general feeling that good lighting conditions necessarily imply great expense. This article takes up the subject from the angle of lessened expense; it relates how the manager of a large department store in New York was aided by the Indus-

trial Commission to reduce the cost without reducing the psychological effect, or the intensity of illumination on selling planes, although the position of the outlets was not changed.

On careful investigation it was found that many units could be reduced in wattage with practically the same effect. Changing partitions in some instances helped the lighting conditions. Numerous units of 300 and 500 watt capacity located near windows proved quite unnecessary during the greater portion of the day. The custom of burning all lights fifteen minutes before opening and until everyone had left the building was responsible for much useless expense.

EYE PROTECTION FOR THE FIREMAN. C. Rye, *National Engineer*, May, 1924. Discusses the danger to the fireman's eyes from exposure to intense brightness and heat. Suggests a green celluloid shade of a type through which the wires in an electric bulb may be clearly seen. Mr. Rye believes this will save fuel as well as eyes. Perhaps a word of warning should be sounded in regard to the inflammability of celluloid.

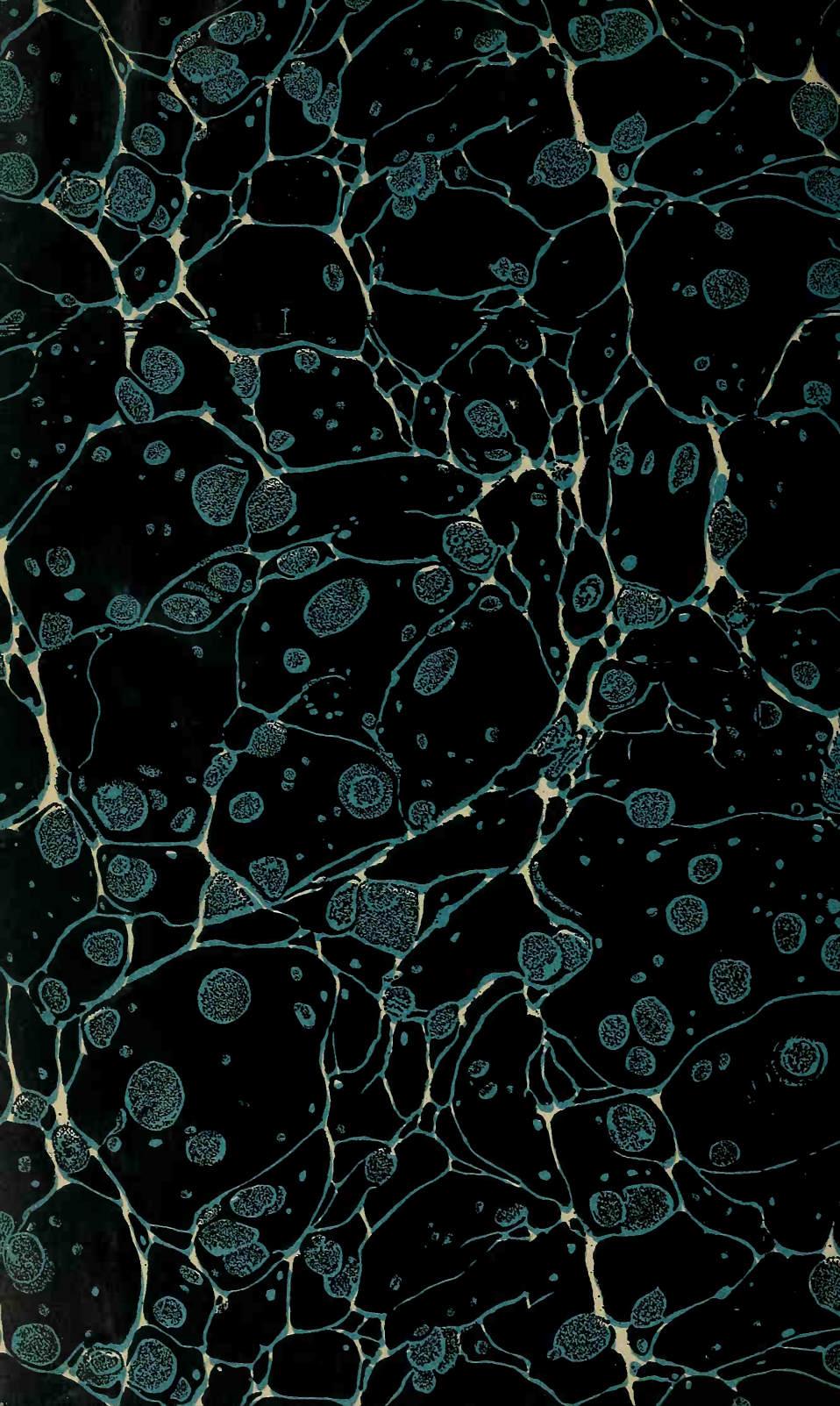
THE DETECTION OF MALINGERING IN INDUSTRIAL OPHTHALMOLOGY. Sydney Walker, Jr., M.D., *The Nation's Health*, April, 1924. The author presents his material under three headings: "(1) simulation of an ocular injury or disease which does not exist; (2) false attribution, the assignment to an actually existent disease or injury of an untrue cause; and (3) exaggeration, the pretense that a certain injury or disease which does actually exist, is greater than is really the case. Closely related to the above is dissimulation, the pretense that an actually existent disease or injury does not exist."

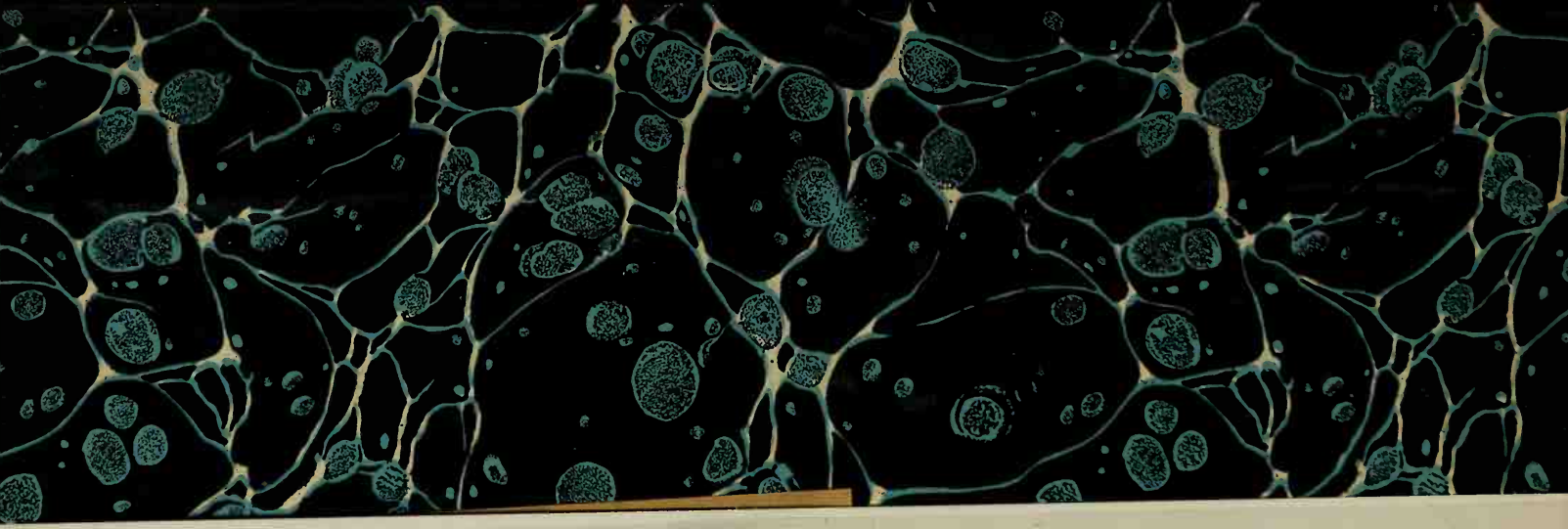
The author cites a number of tests for discovering these types of malingering.

PROBLEMS OF FACTORY LIGHTING. Editorial, *The Nation's Health*, April, 1924. Considers the much discussed question of the relationship of eye injury to poor illumination and the compiling of statistics on too little data.

THE EYES—WHAT EVERYBODY SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THEM. Dr. William Campbell Posey, *Hearst's International*, May, 1924. "Once the majority of old people were practically blind. People at thirty-five were older than they are today at sixty. When glasses were invented new powers and comforts were added to human life."

The article gives a clear description of the errors of refraction, with drawings and other illustrations, and suggests what should be done to correct these defects. It outlines briefly the reasons for medical inspection of school children, and the provision made by some public school systems for educating children with seriously defective vision in sight-saving classes.





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